

news from the department of the interior, bureau of land management • winter 2002 & spring 2003

Las Vegas Real Estate Jackpot

With all the excitement of high stakes gaming, BLM Nevada netted \$180 million in an auction of public land near Las Vegas. The November auction of real estate to the highest bidders was over in about two hours. Pulling in \$1.5 million a minute, auctioneer Mike McKee, of TNT Auction, surpassed the past public land sales conducted under the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (Act).

BLM averaged \$160,000 an acre at the November auction, with some parcels selling at 268 percent above appraised value. Across the board, the competitive bidding brought in 183 percent above fair market value as set by the appraisal process. Focus Property group of Las Vegas spent \$159 million for 992 acres of public land located in southwest Las Vegas.

The big winners are the taxpayers of Nevada and the American public. All of the money collected from the land sales stay in Nevada. The vast majority of the money, 85 percent, is used to buy and protect environmentally sensitive lands in Clark County and elsewhere in Nevada, as well as fund capital improvements at federal recreation sites surrounding Las Vegas;

parks, trails and natural areas in Clark County; development of a multi-species habitat conservation plan in cooperation with Clark County; and the costs of the land sales. Five percent of the receipts go to the Nevada School Trust Fund and 10 percent go to the Southern Nevada Water Authority.

So far BLM has raised \$336 million through land sales, exchanges and other land disposal actions under the Act. With this money, the federal government has set aside \$12 million to the Nevada permanent school trust fund, and \$20 million to the Southern Nevada Water Authority. Some of the lands sold fall under the Santini-Burton Act, which designates those monies be used to purchase land in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Additional money will be paid when BLM receives full payment for the sales conducted in 2002. The money raised is invested in an interest bearing U.S. Treasury bills account, which has generated \$5 million in interest. Operating costs since the 1998 Act was passed are \$4.9 million, only two-tenths of a percent of the total monies raised so far.→

\$NPLMA (Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act)

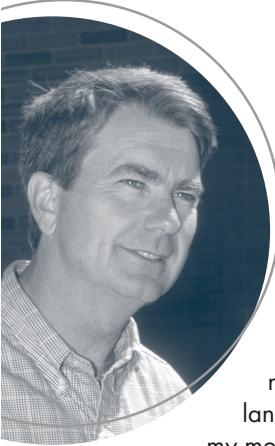
- BLM receipts for nearly 4,000 acres sold since 1999 under SNPLMA: \$336 million
- BLM payments to State of Nevada Permanent Education Fund for land sales for 1999 through 2001: \$12.6 million
- When BLM receives full payment for land sales in 2002, the State of Nevada Permanent Education Fund will receive: \$9.9 million
- BLM payment to Southern Nevada Water Authority: \$20 million
- BLM approved expenditures for parks, trails and natural areas; capital improvements; environmentally sensitive lands and development of the Clark County multi-species habitat conservation plan: \$240 million
- Money generated from the sale of land designated by the

Santini-Burton Act for the purchase of environmentally sensitive land in the Lake Tahoe Basin: \$33 million

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State Director's Comments: Clark County Conservation Act



During my career with the Bureau of Land Management I have had the privilege of working with members of Congress and their staffs on numerous public land issues. One of my most pleasant experiences was working with the staffs of Senator Barry Goldwater and Congressman Mo Udall on wilderness legislation while I was in Arizona. That State was no different from any other when it came to the controversy associated with wilderness designation. What was different at that time was the political courage these two distinguished gentlemen displayed in bringing the wilderness question before the public and then introducing nonpartisan public lands bills which provided some closure to ongoing and often times heated debate.

I am pleased to see similar political courage on the part of the Nevada Congressional delegation with the introduction and passage of the Clark County Conservation Act, which designated 13 wilderness areas and the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area. The Act also released nearly 225,000 acres from wilderness study status and directed the BLM to dispose of additional public lands within Clark County for a multitude of purposes.

While the legislation offers management challenges for the BLM, it reflects the collective wisdom of the members of the Nevada Congressional delegation and their staffs as the United States Congress set aside critical environmentally sensitive lands in perpetuity while allowing for appropriate public lands to remain available for the full array of mul-

tiple uses in this rapidly growing area of Nevada. I applaud Senators Harry Reid and John Ensign and Congressman Jim Gibbons for working with constituency groups and with officials in federal, state, and local governments as they brought together the consensus needed to address existing and future needs.

The true benefit of this legislation will not be recognized for several years but the quality of life that we value will no doubt be enhanced by the vision displayed by our elected officials. This edition of Nevada Sage is intended to highlight that legislation and once again identify the many opportunities the public will have to help BLM employees carry out the vision.

Thankfully, an act of Congress is not subject to appeals and lawsuits. Not so for BLM decisions. The litigious society that we live in is taking a toll on BLM's ability to achieve on the ground results. About 25 percent of the land use decisions we make are appealed or litigated. Most of the time the appeal or lawsuit is by individuals or groups who have chosen not to actively participate in the very public planning and decision process. It often takes two or more years for a resolution; by then the opportunity to address the issue may be lost. While this strategy can be effective in stopping a particular action, the natural resource is often the loser.

I encourage everyone to get involved early in the development of BLM land use plans so we can do a better job of reaching general agreement about how the public lands will be managed. Your involvement in the planning process is your opportunity to influence land use allocations and decisions resulting from the approved plan. Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton emphasizes the need to collaborate, cooperate and communicate in the pursuit of conservation. The BLM's planning process allows for such values to be put into practice.

Let's work together to create meaningful dialogs that will result in improved performance, increased efficiencies, and desired outcomes at all levels of public service. Be assured the BLM's focus in Nevada remains on serving the public and in managing the public's natural resources so that the availability of public lands for multiple uses continues to enhance our quality of life.

- Bob Abbey

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Las Vegas Real Estate Jackpot (continued from page 1)

BLM Nevada has approval to spend \$240 million for the following purposes:

- Make improvements to parks, trails and natural areas: \$73.9 million
- Make other capital improvements: \$42.7 million
- Purchase environmentally sensitive lands: \$119 million
- Develop the Clark County multi-species habitat conservation plan: \$4.6 million.

Specific projects receiving funds include the Las Vegas Springs Preserve project; acquire land for a Clark County Wetlands Park; build an equestrian park near Las Vegas; build new boat ramps at Lake Mead; build a campground at Red Rock Canyon; and renovate a campground in the Spring Mountains.

The Act provides for the disposal of about 27,000 acres of public land in the Las Vegas metropolitan area. The Act was amended by the Clark County Public Land and Natural Resources Act of 2002 to expand the disposal area, adding 22,000 additional acres of available public land for sale under the SNPLMA authority. To date a little more than 4,000 acres have been sold.

"Under the Act, BLM still has nearly 42,000 acres of Las Vegas real estate for sale," said Mark Morse, BLM Las Vegas Field Office manager. "BLM is going to be in this market for quite some time and the benefactors are the American taxpayers."

– Phillip Guerrero
Las Vegas Field Office

"Baca" Bill Valuable Land Sale Tool

Public lands identified for disposal in BLM land use plans are available for sale. BLM's administrative costs to offer public land for sale can exceed the value of the land offered for sale. For example, if someone wants to buy a parcel of public land, the BLM must:

- Survey the parcel, if necessary.
- Publish a notice of realty action in the Federal Register and local newspapers.
- Conduct an appraisal to establish fair market value.
- Conduct clearances for threatened or endangered species and cultural resources.
- Complete appropriate environmental documentation.
- Prepare a mineral report.
- Give a 60-day notification to the governor and congressional delegation.

Under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), 100 percent of the proceeds from the sale of land is deposited directly to the U.S. Treasury general fund and is not available to local field offices to use to process sale requests. In 2000, the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act passed, establishing a funding mechanism to pay BLM's administrative costs.

The Act is commonly referred to as the Baca Bill, because a land transaction to buy the Baca Ranch in New Mexico was part of the

Act. Only public lands meeting criteria established by FLPMA and identified for disposal in land-use plans approved before July 25, 2000, when the Act was signed into law, may be sold under the Act. Disposal by a competitive process is policy preference.

When public land sales are conducted under Baca, the proceeds from sales of public lands in Nevada mostly stay in Nevada. Four percent of proceeds from a Baca sale are paid off the top to the Nevada state school fund. Eighty percent of the remaining proceeds go to BLM Nevada for the purchase of environmentally sensitive lands, or interests in lands such as conservation easements. The other 20 percent may go into the Federal Land Disposal account for use by all states.

Last year, seven parcels in Nevada, more than 1,309 acres, were sold using the Baca authority. The parcels ranged in size from 1.25 acres to 910 acres around the state. Projected Baca sales for 2003 include 10 parcels totaling more than 1,124 acres.

No lands have been purchased from Baca sales money yet. The Departments of Agriculture and Interior are developing a procedural mechanism for acquisition priorities.

In Nevada, nearly 900,000 acres are identified for disposal in BLM land use plans that meet the approval date.

– Richard Brown
Nevada State Office

U.S. Treasury Gives Green Light to Transfer Red Light Landmark to BLM

On behalf of several local, state and Federal programs, the BLM's Carson City Field Office became an advocate to retain in federal ownership the old Mustang Ranch brothel on the lower Truckee River.

That's right retain. How in the world did the Federal government come to own one of the most famous brothels in Nevada history in the first place?

And why would BLM want to keep it?

In 1999, the Mustang Ranch brothel was seized by the Federal government and padlocked after guilty verdicts against the brothel's parent company, A.G.E. Corporation, and its owner Joseph Conforte, in connection with violations of the Racketeering Influence and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO). The brothel has been shuttered ever since. The U.S. District Court of Nevada entered the Final Forfeiture Order in March 2001, and the properties were deposited into the U.S. Treasury Forfeiture Fund. Conforte fled to Brazil 10 years ago to avoid tax charges.

The Mustang Ranch is adjacent to BLM-managed public lands in Storey and Washoe counties and includes 340 acres along 2.5 miles of Truckee River frontage.

It's not the brothels that BLM wants to retain for the benefit of the American public – it's the flood plain, stream-side and riparian habitat, and public access to the trout-laden Truckee River that the agency covets.

More specifically, those portions of the Mustang Ranch that lie in the floodplain of the Truckee River, as defined by the current Truckee Meadows flood planning process, plus a 300 foot buffer of uplands, will remain in public ownership for the purposes of absorbing flood flows, enhancing water quality, aiding recovery of endangered and threatened fish, and providing open space and recreation benefits where they currently do not exist.

Although BLM is particularly interested in using the riparian



Public ownership of the Mustang Ranch property includes 2.5 miles of Truckee River frontage.

properties to support riparian habitat and flood control needs, this interest will be subject to the public planning process. This process will be conducted under existing BLM authorities for land use planning, will consider all reasonable proposals from

interested parties, will assess land resources, will engage public and interagency participation, and will plan for the best use of land resources.

BLM staff members have conducted preliminary field examinations of the Mustang Ranch and are beginning comprehensive public planning of the site now that title has transferred from the Department of the Treasury to BLM.

Newspaper articles about the future of Mustang Ranch have generated ideas ranging from a wild horse and burro adoption center, senior center, long-term health facility, juvenile detention home, conservation camp quarters, and recreational shooting range, to complete removal of the buildings. The buildings are not well-constructed, however, and are not suitable for further use.

If the BLM determines, through the public planning process, that certain Mustang Ranch parcels should be returned to private ownership, the parcels may be sold. The Treasury Department has established a forfeiture account, the Mustang Ranch Management Recovery Fund, for the purpose of depositing the proceeds from the sale of lands and disposal of interests. The proceeds will be used by BLM to recover administrative and management costs for Mustang Ranch operation, maintenance and environmental restoration.

– Mark Struble

Carson City Field Office

Plethora of Petroglyphs

One of the most significant and sacred cultural sites in southern Nevada is 15 miles south of Las Vegas in Sloan Canyon. More than 300 rock art panels with 1,700 individual design elements will receive increased protection through designation as a national conservation area.

The Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area is the nation's newest NCA to be designated by Congress in the Clark County Public Land and Natural Resources Act. The 48,438-acre area is loaded with petroglyphs that archaeologists believe to represent native cultures dating back 3,000 years.

The legislation for the NCA calls for a management plan to be



developed in three years. Initial funding for the planning effort will come from the sale of a 500-acre parcel near the NCA.

Las Vegas Field Office Manager Mark Morse said planning for the NCA will rely heavily on input from tribal governments, the Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council, State of Nevada, Clark County, City of Henderson and interested citizens.

Visitors to the public lands are encouraged to look but don't touch rock art. Like other archaeological artifacts, take only pictures.

– Kirsten Cannon
Las Vegas Field Office

Out of the Study Area and Into the Wilderness

November 6, 2002, proved to be a big day for Southern Nevada when President Bush signed the Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act of 2002.

One of the most significant provisions of the law was the creation of 18 wilderness areas totaling almost 452,000 acres. BLM will manage six wilderness areas, the National Park Service will manage five and BLM, Forest Service and National Park Service will co-manage seven areas.

"This bill is a shining example in how to develop wilderness and lands legislation that meets the needs of the community," said Mark Morse, BLM's Las Vegas Field Office manager. "Through the hard work of the Nevada congressional delegation and the involvement of interest groups, a good balance of resource conservation, multiple use of public lands and urban growth was reached."

While protecting relatively undisturbed natural areas as wilderness, the bill also released nearly 225,000 acres from wilderness study area protection, opening the released areas for multiple uses.

"Designating the wilderness areas allows the BLM to focus on protecting places with significant resource values," said Morse. "By releasing the portions of wilderness study areas that didn't really measure up as wilderness, we can open these lands for multiple uses."

According to Morse, key elements to managing the new wilderness areas include creating a wilderness management plan, surveys, signing, monitoring and patrols.

The wilderness areas are located in the following areas: Red Rock-Mt. Charleston, McCullough Mountains, Searchlight-Nelson, Muddy Mountains, Arrow Canyon and Gold Butte.

Features of these wilderness areas include fossil corals, petroglyph panels, habitat for endangered and sensitive species and colorful rock formations.

The new wilderness areas are open to hiking, camping, hunting, horseback riding and existing livestock grazing. Mining, oil and gas development and road building are not allowed, nor are motorized or mechanical vehicles.

A map of the Clark County wilderness areas is available at www.nv.blm.gov/vegas.

– Kirsten Cannon
Las Vegas Field Office



Good Advice

The charter members of BLM Nevada's three Resource Advisory Councils were given a complex task at their first meeting back in 1995 – develop standards for rangeland health and guidelines to reach those standards. That was a lot to expect from a diverse group of people who had just met.

The councils came through admirably. The standards and guidelines they developed continue to be used by the BLM in managing the public rangelands.

The Resource Advisory Councils, or RACs, were formed by the Secretary of Interior to provide counsel and advice to the Secretary through the BLM's field managers and state directors on planning, management, and disposal of the public lands within the area for

which the council was established.

Nevada has three RACs: the Sierra Front-Northwestern Great Basin RAC, whose advisory jurisdiction is the Carson City and Winnemucca districts; the Northeastern Great Basin RAC, whose jurisdiction is the Elko district and the northern portions of the Ely and Battle Mountain districts, and the Mojave-Southern Great Basin RAC whose advisory jurisdiction is the Las Vegas, and the southern portions of the Ely and Battle Mountain districts.

Members are selected by the Secretary for their ability to provide informed, objective advice on a broad array of public lands issues and their commitment to collaboration in seeking solutions to those issues.

Sierra Front-Northwestern Great Basin

Jacques Etchegoyhen, Chair, Elected Official

Tina Nappe, Vice Chair, Environmental

Susie Askew, Wild Horses and Burros

Karen Boeger, Recreation

James Eidel, Wildlife

Gerry Emm, Native American

John Falen, Federal Permittee/Leasee

John Gebhardt, State Agency

Jerry Hepworth, Energy and Minerals

Robert Kautz, Archaeology

John Mudge, Energy and Minerals

Ernest Paine, Federal Permittee/Leasee

Bill Roullier, Transportation and Rights-of-Way

Sherm Swanson, Academic

Larie Trippet, Public-at-Large

Northeastern Great Basin

Vince Garcia, Chair, Native American

Kathryn Ataman, Archaeology/Historic

Brent Howerton, Transportation and Rights-of-Way

Art Gale, Federal Permittee/Leasee

John Ellison, Elected Official

Duane Erickson, Environment

Dave Gaskin, State Agency

Barry Perryman, Academic

Vacant, Wildlife

Todd Schwandt, Permitted Recreation

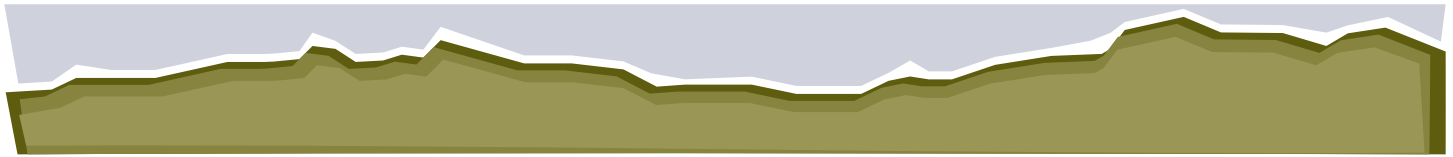
Dave Tattam, Wild Horses and Burros

Patsy Tomera, Public-At-Large

Bill Upton, Energy and Minerals

Hank Vogler, Federal Permittee/Leasee

Jeff White, Energy and Minerals



RAC members serve a three-year term and may be reappointed by the Secretary for an indefinite number of terms. They are not paid a salary, but are reimbursed for travel expenses.

Each RAC consists of 15 members from a variety of disciplines: Federal grazing permits or leases; energy and mineral development; transportation or rights-of-way; developed outdoor recreation, off-highway vehicle users, or commercial recreation activities; nationally or regionally recognized environmental or resource conservation organizations; dispersed recreational activities; archaeological and historical interests; nationally or regionally recognized wild horse and interest groups; elected official; State agency responsible for the management of natural resources, land

or water; Native American tribe; academican in natural resource management or the natural sciences; and the public-at-large.

Nevada's RACs completed the standards for rangeland health and guidelines to meet those standards and moved on to other issues such as land use plans, off-highway vehicle use and guidelines, wild horse and burro guidelines, grazing trespasses, and land sales based on congressionally mandated laws for southern Nevada.

If you are interested in becoming a RAC member, call the BLM field manager nearest you.

– Debra Kolkman
Nevada State Office

Mojave-Southern Great Basin

Jerry Helton, Chair, Transportation and Rights-of-Way

Mark Ioli, Mineral Development

Marta Agee, Federal Permittee/Leasee

Dr. Colleen Beck, Archaeology/Historic

Bob Maichle, Environment

Patrick John Chicas, Permitted Recreation

Billie Young, Wild Horses and Burros

John Hiatt, Wildlife

Steven Parker, Academic

Maurice Frank-Churchill, Native American

Steve Mellington, Public-At-Large

Ed Skudlarek, State Agency

George "John" Weisser, Dispersed Recreation

Thalia Dondero, Elected Official

Ben Patterson, Federal Permittee/Leasee

RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCILS

GETTING ALONG

The Smith family has owned the Cottonwood Ranch, about 100 miles north of Elko in the O'Neil Basin, for many years. The ranch spreads across about 35,000 acres of private land and public rangelands. Ten years ago, ranch owner and operator Agee Smith was butting heads with federal land managers over grazing in the Cottonwood Allotment.

"In the early 1990s, we were at loggerheads with the federal agencies," said Smith. "The cut, cut, cut approach to our grazing permits didn't solve any problems. At one point, BLM planned to put up 17 miles of fence around riparian areas on our allotment. We knew we had to do something different in order to survive.

"My father, Horace, went to a Holistic Resource Management (HRM) class in 1993," said Smith. "He told me it might be something worthwhile for us. I went to the next class and there were BLM and Forest Service people taking the course as well. We decided to give the new approach a try."

Steve Rich, a founding partner of Higher Ground and a grazing consultant from Jacob Lake, Arizona, was a co-facilitator for the Smith's Cottonwood HRM Project. For Rich, the key to the program's success is to create a climate of respect.

"Holistic management is a process to optimize biodiversity and the health of the land in order to achieve ecological, economic and social goals," said Rich. "The process involves creating a community that has all interests represented, even people who may have been enemies. The Cottonwood group did start with some hostility, but we were able to create a climate of respect. We value people who look at things a different way. That's part of the success."

What started as a five-year experiment in collaborative or holis-

tic management in 1995 is still going on, seven years later.

More than 60 people attended the initial meetings. The Smith family, many local ranchers and other local interests, Elko County Commissioners, and interested publics from several western states showed up. Many agencies also participated in the group, including U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Nevada Division of Wildlife, Elko County Cooperative Extension, U.S. Forest Service, Nevada Division of Forestry, Nevada Division of Agriculture,

Nevada Cattlemen's Association, The Nature Conservancy, Natural Resources Defense Council, Bureau of Land Management, and more.

"Elko County and a bunch of people got involved," said Agee, "and made it a community project. We began talking instead of screaming."

The group meets twice in the fall and winter to discuss the project, determine if progress is being made toward their objectives, or if any adjustments are needed. Members also take an annual field trip each summer to look at progress on the land.

For the Cottonwood HRM project, many range improvements have been made, such as new or repaired fencing, new water troughs and water pipelines.

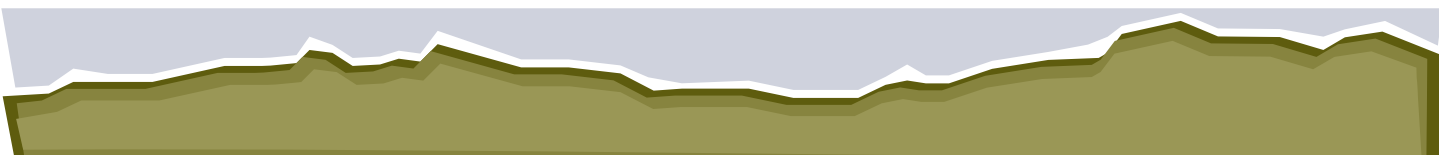
But, the primary change is the grazing system. Prior to the project, the BLM allotment was divided into four pastures and the forest into two pastures. With the HRM approach, the allotment was divided into 34 smaller pastures using fences and natural barriers. Using intensive herding and electric fences, cows are grazed in each pasture for short periods of time, from a couple days to a few weeks. The result is better vegetation regeneration.

In August 2000, a new challenge was thrown at the project—the 32,000-acre Camp Creek Fire. The fire burned a major portion of the Cottonwood allotment. An intensive fire

PHOTO BY MIKE BROWN



Holistic Resource Management group member Leta Collord (left) and Cottonwood Ranch owner Agee Smith examine range conditions and vegetation recovery.



IS WORKING

rehabilitation effort was made in 2001. A rehabilitated burn area has to be rested until the vegetation meets monitoring criteria established when a fire closure is made. A typical time frame for a closure is about two years.

During the 2002 group field tour to evaluate range conditions and rehabilitation from the fire, BLM Range Specialist Chris Robbins noted that the Cottonwood Allotment was making excellent recovery, definitely better than most burns. He attributed the quick recovery to the area having the desired vegetation prior to the fire. As a result, some areas of the BLM allotment had recovered sufficiently from the fire to meet monitoring criteria to allow grazing to resume in the fall.

The flexibility of the HRM project enabled the Smiths to adjust their operation to compensate for the temporary loss of public land forage and continue grazing cattle using their private lands and the unburned public portion of the allotment.

While all the members of the group are proud of the success of the project, some of the members point to specific reasons why.

Leta Collord, a founding group member from Elko, said the main reason for the success of the HRM project has been the diligence of the Smiths.

"Agee Smith and his family have gone to tremendous lengths to learn and accommodate the concerns of wildlife people, range people, environmentalists and other stakeholders with their various perspectives," said Collord. "Agee makes a real effort to listen and learn."

Marge Kaiser, another founding group member from California, credits the program's success to stakeholder collaboration.

"To me, the reason for the success of the HRM project is the diversity of the people and that the group got off on the right foot," said Kaiser.

"Tommie Martin and Steve Rich facilitated the first meeting. Fifty people were there. Tommie and Steve asked 'Why are you here?' People spoke from the heart. They were tired of fighting with the agencies. They got to a common denominator of every-

one wanting something good for the land. Just how you get there is where the differences are. It's been a model of collaboration. Everyone hashes it out."

BLM Elko Field Manager Helen Hankins is impressed with the results.

"It's impossible to tell the story of the Cottonwood Allotment from just one agency's or one group's perspective," said Hankins, "because this experiment brought together many non-traditional partners. This project is an unqualified success. The natural resource objectives are being met. The riparian areas are healing and becoming more productive. If there is anything that I could change it would be to have greater flexibility to try new things within the context of BLM's regulations."

The HRM project made a big difference in ranch operations for Agee Smith and his family. For one thing they achieved the goal of building their own herd of cattle.

"We started with 65 head and now have more than 700 cows and yearlings," said Smith. "A primary success of the project has been getting control of the cattle, although herding has been a challenge. We're getting better with electric fences. Another reason for success has been the team effort of many people. It's made a huge difference in the operations of the ranch."

Steve Rich praised the Smith family's determination and tenacity.

"We're working to create a sustainable grazing culture that can solve any environmental problem," said Rich. "The main reason for the success of this HRM project is that the Smiths have stayed with it. They're hardworking and have shown tremendous courage. They're willing to experiment and to do things that may go against their culture. The bottom line is, it's possible to run a private ranch, be profitable, and protect the environment. Problems are solvable."

- Mike Brown
Elko Field Office

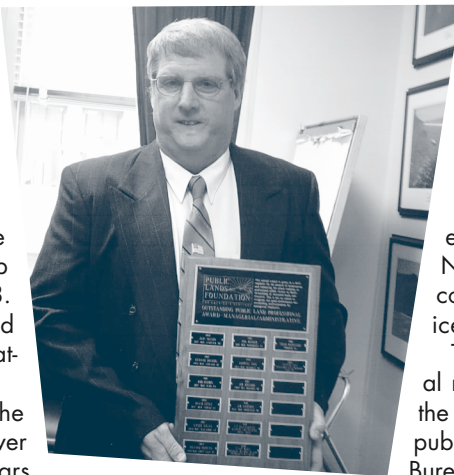
OKE HONORED

Public Land Foundation Honors Elko Manager

For the second year in a row, the Public Land Foundation has given a BLM Nevada employee its "Outstanding Public Lands Professional" award. Clint Oke, assistant field manager for renewable resources in the Elko Field Office, received the award at a special ceremony in Washington, D.C. The national award is described by Foundation President George Lea as recognition of special professional achievement and courage, not simply good performance.

Oke (pronounced Oak) faced one of the biggest challenges of his career after a field trip to the Little Humboldt Allotment in 1998. Decades of season-long grazing had degraded stream habitat important to supporting the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT).

It was necessary to temporarily close the basin to livestock grazing. That didn't go over well with the rancher and resulted in a few years of legal wrangling. Oke persevered with guidance and patience to motivate BLM staff to do the appropriate monitoring and data collection necessary to show why the changes were necessary.



Oke also kept the lines of communication open with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior solicitors and the rancher throughout the process.

A key element to Oke's success in reaching an agreement with the permittee to change the grazing prescription was in finding other places for the livestock when the basin was temporarily closed to grazing.

The resolution of this grazing dispute is an example of how Interior Secretary Gale Norton's 4 Cs can work: communication, consultation and cooperation, all in the service of conservation.

The Public Land Foundation is the only national membership organization dedicated solely to the protection and perpetuation of the Nation's public lands under the administration of the Bureau of Land Management. It is a nonprofit group whose members are private individuals, organizations, and retired and active BLM employees.

New EZ Adopt at PVC

Recent changes at the National Wild Horse and Burro Center at Palomino Valley, just 20 miles north of Reno, make it easier than ever to adopt a Living Legend.

A limited group of animals located in specific adoption pens are available for walk-up adopters to see during business hours. Animals in the large holding pens can be adopted by appointment.

The adoption fee is \$125. BLM employees at the facility can screen and approve potential adopters, applying

and can go to its new home. The waiting period is usually about 10 days.

State of Nevada brand inspectors are on site Monday and Wednesday to provide the forms necessary to comply with state transportation laws. Each adopter also receives a health certificate for the adopted horse.

Palomino Valley Center is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., except for federal holidays. From Interstate 80, take exit 18 and follow

Wild horses from the Owyhee Herd Management Area (HMA) in extreme northwestern Elko County and the Monte Cristo HMA in southwest White Pine County were gathered this winter. Many Owyhee horses are gray, while Monte Cristo has a variety of color in its wild horse bands.

revised, national standardized requirements. Pen size and height, construction material and availability of shelter are important adoption criteria. In many states, including Nevada, a follow-up visit will be made in the first six months to ensure the pen meets BLM criteria and that the animal is being properly cared for.

Male animals, one year or older, can be gelded at Palomino Valley free of charge. A veterinarian will determine when the animal has recovered from the operation

Pyramid Way (State Route 445) north about 20 miles to Ironwood Road. Turn east on Ironwood to reach the corrals and office. The phone number is (775) 475-2222. Applications are available at www.wildhorseandburro.blm.gov. Descriptions of Nevada wild horse herd management areas also are posted at the Nevada link.

– Maxine Shane
Nevada State Office



Ely's Native-American Coordinator Keeps on Track

Southern Paiute tribal member Elvis Wall is the Native-American coordinator at the BLM Ely Field Office. Wall started the job in September with the idea to use his previous experience as a tribal representative to help the Native-American community get more involved in federal land management issues.

"I'm looking forward to working closely with federally recognized tribes," said Wall. "I want to invite them to get involved in the decision-making processes that affect them early on."

Off the job, Wall is into model railroading. He specializes in HO scale trains, specifically Amtrak's "Desert Wind" run that operated between Los Angeles and Salt Lake City until it was discontinued in 1996.

"Amtrak used four entirely different paint schemes during the train's operation and I have all of them, except for the first one, and I'm working on that," he said.

Wall was born in St. George, Utah. He moved to Apple Valley, Calif., where in 1976, he graduated from Apple Valley High School.

He enlisted in the U.S. Navy following high school and just recently retired from the U.S. Naval Reserve, having served his country for 19 years. Taking advantage of the G.I. Bill, Wall completed undergraduate studies at Southern Utah University, in Cedar City. He has continued his education at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas.

- Chris Hanefeld
Ely Field Office

Native American Serves as Two-way Street

Battle Mountain native and Western Shoshone TeMoak Tribal member Gerald Dixon is the BLM's first full-time Native American coordinator in northeastern Nevada. Dixon splits his time between the Elko and Battle Mountain field offices as a liaison for Native Americans and the BLM. He helps to identify issues and concerns Tribal governments, community members, and other Native groups may have with federal land management actions or projects. Dixon works towards ensuring that native groups and individuals are properly informed of and have the best opportunity to effectively participate in public land decisions that might affect them.

"My work is a balancing act," said Dixon. "I maintain detailed documentation of BLM's consultation efforts while attempting to effectively communicate with Battle Mountain and Elko staff members. I help to educate and inform the field offices of native issues, determine and explain when and why we need to consult, and explain all legal mandates that define BLM's responsibilities to tribal entities.

"I also serve as advisor to BLM management, keeping them informed of Native issues and concerns. On the flip side, although I am Western Shoshone, born and raised in the Elko-Battle Mountain area, I must maintain my professional objectivity in representing the BLM's position on many projects. This presents a challenge at times, in having to communicate and interact with friends and relatives in the Native communities on a different professional level.

"This position has been one of my greatest challenges," said Dixon. "For a more trusting and positive relationship to develop between the BLM and Tribal entities, there must be a continued drive towards internal change not only in the BLM, but also in the tribes. Changing beliefs, ideas, manners in which people have worked in the past, and bridging cultural and communication gaps does not happen overnight. Change is gradual."

A seven-season veteran of BLM Elko's fire program, Dixon served as an engine foreman his last three years. Dixon is a graduate of Eastern Oregon University, with a bachelor's degree in cultural anthropology.

- Mike Brown
Elko Field Office



"The View from Moriah," a 10-foot by 3-foot oil painting by wildlife artist Larry Zabel, was sold at the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation's annual Elk Camp in Reno in February for \$25,000. The net proceeds from the painting will benefit the Eastern Nevada Landscape Restoration Project in the Ely area.

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